BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF GAME AND FISH.

Mr. Bensley moved for leave to introduce a Bill providing for the protection of Game and Fish. He said:—

Gentlemen,

Travancore is well known throughout India as 'The Model State.' But her fame extends beyond India and she is celebrated in Europe and in fact all over the world as being one of the best places for sport that exist. A country possessing and deservedly such a reputation should, I presume, do something to preserve it and it is with a view to this end that I venture to bring in the Bill before the Council.

Owing to the opening of the more inaccessible parts of the Travancore forests and plateaux, the remote haunts that used to form a sanctuary for various sorts of game are now invaded by man—and unfortunately, very frequently, by men who, for the sake of slaughter, have no consideration of the consequences of their action upon the general stock of game.

I have for years taken a strong personal interest in the subject and am completely in accord with the Secretary of the Peermaad Planters' Association in his letter No. 81 of 12th June 1894, when he says that already whole tracts of country are completely shot out.

Now, Gentlemen, the game found in the Forests of Travancore may be enumerated as follows.—Elephants, Bison, Sambhur, Spotted Deer, Muntjac or Barking Deer, Mouse Deer, Ibex, Hares, Tigers, Leopards and Pigs.

Of these animals Elephants are already protected by a Royal Proclamation. Tigers and leopards are left to take care of themselves and it is not proposed to include pigs within the scope of the Bill.

The grounds upon which objection is sometimes taken to a Game Act or a gun-license are, that destructive animals may ruin crops and the cultivators have no means of protecting themselves. In the first place, this Bill will contain a special provision allowing any owner or occupier of land to have a gun without license and use it on his own property for the protection of his crops; and in the second place, the elephant which is far the most destructive animal is already protected by Government and people are accustomed to the restriction that saves this magnificent and useful animal from extermination. Pigs which are the next in destructive power it is not proposed to protect.

Thus Bison, Sambhur, Spotted Deer, Muntjac, Ibex, Hares and Mouse Deer remain. Of these Bison, Ibex, Muntjac, Hares and Mouse Deer are absolutely harmless to cultivation and the only animals which we propose to protect that can be at all charged with destructive propensities are Sambhur and Spotted Deer against whose minor depredations cultivators can protect themselves under the clauses of the Act.

So far I have spoken of the Mammalia. I propose also to protect those beautiful game-birds whose habits render them an attractive object of sport and whose protection cannot be looked upon as a hardship. In this list I would for the present include pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, spur-fowl and quail.

I have also endeavoured to save fish from wanton and ruthless destruction and the clauses referring to this point are not the least important in the Bill.

The means by which we propose to protect game is first by the fixing of a close time during which the killing of any animal named in the Bill will be illegal, second by issuing a gun-license and third by issuing a game-license. The second of these proposals is additional to the provisions of Act II of 1879 upon which the present Bill is based, and it has been brought in because all the authorities consulted upon the subject for instance the Peermaad Planters' Association (Vide their Draft Act of 1888) the Conservator of Forests (Vide his No. 89 of 13th June 1890 and his No. 1316 of 17th July 1894) and the District Magistrate of the Cardamom Hills (Vide his No. 499 of 4th July 1894) think that such a license is essential to the successful working of the Act. I would refer to Mr. Bourdillon's letter first quoted for detailed reasons admirably set forth by that officer.

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It then behoves us to provide for the enforcement of the Act. The most effective agency will be the employés of the Forest and Cardamom Departments, in a minor degree the Police, but in addition, it will be necessary to empower proprietors and managers of property to demand the production of licenses and to arrest persons infringing the provisions of the Act. I must here say that the Government is indebted to the consistent action of the planters on the High Range and Peermaad Hills for the fact that more serious damage has not been done to the game on those Ranges. Most of the leading planters have prohibited their employés and any one coming under their influence from indiscriminate slaughter of game and by giving proprietors and managers legal authority to act in the matter the end proposed by this Bill will be materially advanced.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Mr. Bensley also introduced the Bill and moved that the Bill and Statement of Objects and Reasons be published in the Gazette and that its principle be discussed at the next ordinary meeting.

The motion was put and agreed to.

BILL TO AMEND THE STAMP REGULATION.

Mr. Thanu Pillay moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Stamp Regulation briefly explaining the nature of the proposed amendments.

The motion was put and agreed to.

PENAL CODE BILL.

Mr. Krishnaswamy Rao moved that Mr. Prince be appointed a member of the Select Committee *re* Penal Code Bill in the place of the late Mr. Watts.

Mr. Thanu Pillay seconded the motion.

Carried.

The Council adjourned to Saturday the $\frac{\text{29th June 1895}}{\text{16th Mithunam 1070.}}$ —2 P. M.

SHUNGRASOOBYER,

President.

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